

More than 160 seventh-graders presented problems and solutions regarding water conservation at a simulated legislative hearing at Elm Place Middle School in Highland Park today. The hearing is a part of Project Citizen, a national program for middle schools to help engage students in community issues. Along with state legislators and local officials, I served on the panel that listened to the many ideas that these promising students presented.

Living so close to Lake Michigan, it is easy to take our access to the world's largest freshwater supply for granted. But according to the U.S. EPA, more than 36 states will experience local or regional water shortages in the next seven years. Additionally, there are restrictions in place that limit how much water we can take out of the Great Lakes.

One of the recommendations that the students discussed was limiting the time that automatic faucets run. The students even mentioned that they were going to go to their school board to discuss the proposed changes. By giving students a forum for their ideas, Project Citizen encourages the next generation of leaders to tackle some of our nation's most pressing issues. My special thanks go out to Dr. Mark Hill for moderating the event, and Elm Place teacher Cheryl Levi, one of the [10 for the 10th](#).